CLAIMS

1. A ~~purified~~ polynucleotide comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2, or the complement of said polynucleotide.

2. The polynucleotide of Claim 1 comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

3. ~~An antisense molecule~~ comprising the complement of the polynucleotide of Claim 2 or a portion thereof.

~~4. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the antisense molecule of Claim 3 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.~~

5. A ~~diagnostic composition~~ comprising an oligomer of the polynucleotide of Claim 2.

6. A diagnostic test for a condition associated with altered VR-L expression comprising the steps of:

a) providing a biological sample;

b) combining the biological sample and the diagnostic composition of Claim 5;

c) allowing hybridisation to occur between the biological sample and the diagnostic composition under suitable conditions;

d) measuring the amount of hybridisation to obtain a sample value; and

e) comparing the sample value with standard values to determine whether vr-l expression is altered.

7. An expression vector comprising the polynucleotide of Claim 1.

8. A host cell transformed with the expression vector of Claim 7.

9. A method of producing a polypeptide, said method comprising the steps of:

a) culturing the host cell of Claim 8 under conditions suitable for the expression of the polypeptide; and

b) recovering the polypeptide from the host cell culture.

10. A purified polypeptide (VR-L) comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

~~11. A diagnostic composition comprising the polypeptide of Claim 10 or a portion thereof.~~

12. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the polypeptide of Claim 10 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

13. An antibody specific for the purified polypeptide of Claim 9, or for a portion of that polypeptide.

~~14. A diagnostic composition comprising the antibody of Claim 13.~~

15. A diagnostic test for a condition associated with altered VR-L expression comprising the steps of:

a) providing a biological sample;

b) combining the biological sample and the antibody of Claim 13 under conditions suitable for complex formation;

c) measuring the amount of complex formation between VR-L and the antibody to obtain a sample amount; and

d) comparing the amount of complex formation in the sample with standard amounts of complex formation, wherein a variation between sample amount and standard amounts of complex formation establishes the presence of the condition.

16. A method of screening a plurality of compounds for specific binding affinity with the polypeptide of Claim 10 or any portion thereof comprising the steps of:

a) providing a plurality of compounds;

b) combining VR-L with each of a plurality of compounds for a time sufficient to allow binding under suitable conditions; and

c) detecting binding of VR-L to each of the plurality of compounds, thereby identifying the compounds which specifically bind VR-L.

17. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of Claim 16 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.